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ABSTRACT

The source of contemporary attitudes toward sexuality, power, and politics is found in the literature of the ancient Greeks, specifically, Plato's "Republic" and "Symposium," Aristotle's "Politics," and the plays of Aeschylus and Aristophanes. The "Symposium" can be read as an account of how sexuality can be incorporated into the public life of the polis (city-state, community). The man who loves the body rather than the soul is associated with the female world and is seen as subordinate to the things associated with maleness and the higher world. The outcome of Aeschylus' "The Oresteia" suggests that Athens as a public arena depended on the domestication of the female forces of disorder. For Aristotle, the political community is an exclusively male community in which power and sexuality are intertwined and the exercise of political power involves rule over equals and over those worth loving and worth dominating (e.g., other males in the political arena). Finally, Aristophanes' comedies depend on women breaking away from their traditional roles with catastrophic results for the political community. Power becomes domination of those outside the community (women, slaves, and laborers), within the community (male peers), and of the appetitive and irrational part of the self. In sum, a change in our understanding of politics and power would require a change in our understanding of the human relation to nature and to the body and in the social relations which are the source of this world view. (Author/KC)

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SEXUALITY, POWER, AND POLITICS

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This paper has developped out of a paper presented at the 1978 Eastern Division Meetings of the Society for Women in Philosophy. It has benefited from their criticisms and from suggestions of a number of others--among them, Richard Flathman, Donna Haraway, Nannerl Keohane, Robert Peabody, John Pocock, and Molly Shanley.

The suggestion that there could be a connection between the Western understandings of power and politics on the one hand, and of sexuality on the other, is most commonly traced to the recent resurgence of the women's liberation movement. While it is certainly true that feminists have called attention to this issue, an exploration of the relations among sexuality and power--or more precisely, what I have termed the erotic dimension of power--can best be carried out through an examination of ancient Athenian sources such as Plato's Republic and Symposium, Aristotle's Politics, and the plays of Aeschylus and Aristophanes. These sources can shed useful light on our contemporary problem, since they address the sexual dimension of power relations much more directly, without the obfuscating metaphor of the market. These sources allow us to see more clearly the fusion of virility and domination in the person of the Homeric warrior-hero, and later, in more attenuated form, in the Athenian citizen. In addition, they call attention to the close relation between questions of power and questions about the nature of the community.

There are of course important differences between Greek society and our own. These very differences can help to illuminate our modern problem. Greek society, much less than our own, depended on the view that social relations were equivalent to exchange relations, and could be understood on that model. The Greek understanding of politics and power rested more directly on the division between women and men, between female sexuality and male sexuality, between the household, a private and a-political space, and the polis, a public and political space. It was moreover a division between a realm of necessity and a realm of freedom, a realm of inequality and a realm

of equality, a realm where the body was dominant, and a realm where the soul or intellect was dominant. And all this both rested on and reinforced a profound misogyny. The result was a creation of an understanding of politics and political power as activities which occurred in an arena characterized by freedom from necessary labor, dominance of intellect or soul, and equality among the participants. It was a constructed, historical arena, in which political power rested on heroic action defined both by courage in war and courage in speech, a world made up exclusively of men. It rested on, depended on, but yet at the same time opposed another world-- a world where necessity ruled, where inequality and hierarchy were central, where bodily needs as opposed to those of the soul or intellect were dominant, a world in which heroic action was not even a possibility, a natural world, a world of women--the household. Important sources for Western understandings of politics and power can be found,then, in the work of classical Greek theorists. Their understanding of politics and power- and ours, depending on it--rested on heroic action and on virtue or manliness understood as the ability to dominate others in a competition. The refracted impact of these dualities still structures our thinking.

In sum, I will be attempting to say something about a set of contemporary issues by giving a series of readings of some ancient Athenian sources and showing the congruence between these and some features of our contemporary world view. My purpose here is not to engage in an essay in classical scholarship, but rather to recognize the existence of a Western intellectual tradition which has had profound effects on the ways we both understand and participate in power relations, sexual relations, and politics.

Before I turn to these ancient sources I must state more clearly what I mean by my argument that a more adequate account of power must begin with explicit attention to the erotic dimension of human existence. This will require, first, a restatement of some of the commonplace links between sexuality and power, especially power understood as power over others, or domination; second, a brief specification of what is meant by eros; and third, a more complete statement of the relation between eros and the problem of community.

Sexuality and Power

The links between power and sexuality , especially virility and domination, have been mentioned by many. For example, philosopher Bertrand de Jouvenal has noted that "a man feels himself more of a man when imposing himself and making others the instrument of his will."[1] A social scientist has introduced a book on concepts of power, influence, and authority with the remark that the first is linked with notions of potency, virility, and masculinity, and"appears much sexier than the other two."[2] And what are we to make of Henry Kissinger's perhaps apocryphal remark "Power is the ultimate aphrodisiac?" Or the fact that in the recent "snuff" films, the erotic action consisted in the dismemberment and death of a

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[1] Berenice Carroll, "Peace Research The Cult of Power," Journal of Conflict Resolution 4 (1972), 588. She takes the statement from Hannah Arendt, "Reflections on Violence," Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 23,1 (1969), p. 12.

[2] See David Bell, Power, Influence, and Authority (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975),p. 8.

woman? The associative links beteeen manliness, virility, power and domination are very strong in Western culture. Feminist analyses of rape and pornography have called attention to the links , and lead me to suggest that eros and power are fused in our culture: Power is sexy. And eros or sexuality is powerful. And to the extent that either is structured by a dynamic of domination/submission, the other as well will operate along those dimensions. The conflation of sexuality and power in the contemporary Western world, is demonstrated by the fact that exercises of power and domination are systematically confused with sexual acts.

What feminists have referred to as "rape ideology", and the current feminist debates about pornography describe this cultural confusion. Susan Brownmiller and others have argued strongly that rape is not a sexual act, or an act of lust, but rather is an act of domination and humiliation.[3] Brownmiller suggests that rape, once put "within the context of modern criminal violence and not within the purview of ancient masculine codes" will be seen to fall " midway between robbery and assault." She argues that rape involves the gaining of a highly valued sexual service, and that the intent is not merely to take, but to humiliate.[4] Rape has been essential to the process of estabishing male power throughout history; it has been a part of a "conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep

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[3] See Susan Griffin, "Rape, the All American Crime," Ramparts 10 (September, 1971), pp. 26-35; Andrea Medea and Kathleen Thompson, Against Rape (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1974); Heidi Hartmann and Ellen Ross, "Comment on 'On Writing the History of Rape,'" Signs III,4 (Summer, 1978) 931-935.

all women in a state of fear."[5] This analysis of course opposes the traditional view that rape is either the act of an ordinary man strangely overcome with lust or that of a maniac continually subject to excessive lust. On the latter view, rape is an unavoidable part of human behavior due to men's overwhelming sexual desires--desires which must find an outlet.[6]

Opinions such as this are more than simply a backward part of the popular culture or legal system. They appear in more traditional academic garb as well. For example, Edward Shorter criticized Brownmiller's argument and suggested that while rape today may be a political act, at least in the "three or four centuries before the French Revolution," rape can be charged to "sexual frustration."[7] He argues that there were few means of sexual release available for men in that period other than rape. It is this "huge, restless mass of

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4 See Susan Brownmiller, Against Our Will (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975), pp. 423-424. My own view is that it is more an assault than a robbery, the latter term being too bound up with our general exchange mentality.

5 Ibid., p. 5. She notes that Margaret Mead and other anthropolotists have discovered the use of gang rape in a number of cultures as a control mechanism (p. 315), and documents the extensive use of rape in war as a policy of intimidation of the conquered.

6 See for example, Medea and Thompson, Against Rape, p. 32. See also Brownmiller's conversations with reporters in Vietnam, in Against our Will pp. 87-118;

7 Edward Shorter, "On Writing the History of Rape," Signs III,2 (Winter, 1977) 471-482.

sexually frustrated men," (existing, he admits, in a social system which maximized male domination) which led to rape.[8] My point here is less to argue against Shorter's position (although I oppose it) than to draw attention to the systematic confusion of sexuality and power represented in such a form of debate.

Whether pornography is simply erotic literature or whether it involves systematic domination and degradation revolves around similar questions. Some feminists have recently begun to oppose pornography less because of its depiction of (female) bodies than because of the violence it shows directed at women. They suggest that images of women in chains, being beaten, or threatend with attack carry the social message that "victimized women are sexually appealing" and that "the normal male is sexually aggressive in a brutal and demeaning way."[9] "What does it mean, they ask, "when men advertize, even brag, that their movie is the 'bloodiest thing that ever happened in front of a camera.'"[10] And one psychoanalyst has suggested that although one of the important dynamics of pornography is hostility, "one can raise the possibly controversial question whether in humans (especialy males) powerful sexual excitement can ever exist without brutality also being present."[11] Statements such

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[8] Ibid., p. 474.

[9] Women Against Violence Against Women Newsletter June, 1976,p. 1.

[10] Aegis, Nov./Dec. 1978, p.3

as this highlight the ways sexuality and domination are linked; and lead to the conlusion that arguments about whether pornography is erotic or depends instead on objectification and degradation are fundamentaly insoluble. What is erotic in Western culture (and has been for thousands of years) is violence and domination-- especially but not necessarily directed against women.

By highlighting the importance of this cultural confusion , it is possible to open up the question of its theoretical significance for the understanding of power. The conflation of sexuality and power has become so lodged in the popular mind thattheir real relations have been rendered almost invisible and therefore inaccessible to analysis. Feminists have provided an important service to political theorists by exposing the weakness of these assumptions. In exposing the cultural confusion, they have raised the question of how an analysis of power could include the erotic dimension. Our effort to construct such an account should begin with a brief consideration of what is meant by eros. The erotic dimension of human existence goes beyond, but still includes the confusion of sexuality and domination.

The Nature of Eros

There are three distinct though not necessarily separate aspects of eros. The first is represented by Freud's definition of eros as "the desire to make one out of more than one."[12] This desire for fusion may take a narrowly genital form, or it may assume a variety

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11 Robert Stoller, Perversion: The Erotic Form of Hatred (New York: np 1975), p. 88, cited in Irene Diamond, "Pornography: Backlash and Paralysis," (forthcoming in Signs).

of other configurations. Among the most important are sublimated forms. Freud suggests that the inhibition of the direct aims of sexual impulses anmd their subjugation to the control of "higher psychical agencies; which have subjected themselves to the reality principle," is required for the development of civilization.[13]

The second aspect of *eros* turns on the role given to sensuality and bodily concerns in social life. Historically, Western civilization has found little place for this aspect of *eros* in public life. For example, Plato rejected it as unworthy of the citizen's concern due to the bad effects of uncontrolled appetites--likened in the *Republic* to being at the mercy of "a raging and savage beast of a master."[14] He argued that if the soul were properly ordered, the body would be well taken care of, and therefore was due no special concern.[15] The role of sensuality takes a quite different and opposed place in Marx's thought. In the Theses on Feuerbach, the central place Marx gives to human sensuous experience indicates his respect for rather than devaluation of the body-- with all its needs and

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[12] Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, (New York: Norton, 1961), p. 55. Freud, however, does not recognize the possibility of making one out of more than two.

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 26,51.

[14] *Republic* I:329c (Paul Shorey, tr. ,in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (Princeton: Princeton University Press,1978). All references to dialogues are from this collection unless otherwise noted.

[15] *Republic* III:403d.

failings. What could be more explicit that this oritique of Feuerbach's materialism for not conceiving of reality itself as "human sensuous activity"[16]

The third aspect of eros is that of creativity and generation. This can take the form of intellectual creativity in philosophy and art, pysical work on the substances of nature, or the generation of childern through sexual relations. Psychologists who have pointed to the pleasure in the "effortful achievement of purpose" as fundamental to what makes us human are discussing this aspect of eros.[17] They have suggested that only when these pleasures take pathological forms can sublimation (and the civilization on which it depends) occur.[18] Freud concurs at least to some extent, when he argues that "No other technique of the conduct of life attacheds the individual so firmly to reality aslaying emphsis on work; for his work at least gives him a secure place in a portion of reality, in the human community. The possiblity it offers of displacing a large amount of libidinal components, whether narcissistic, aggressive, or even erotic, on to professional work and on to the human relations connected with it lends it a value by no means second to what it enjoys as something

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[16]"Thesis I," in The Marx-Engels Reader, Robert Tucker, ed. (New York: Norton, 1978, p. 143.

[17]See Dorothy Dinnerstein, The Mermaid and the Minotaur (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1976), p. 140. See also her discussion of Norman Brown, Life Against Death, pp. 135-151.

[18]Dinnerstein, p. 143-3.

indispensible to the preservation and justification of existence in society. ...if it is a freely chosen one... it makes possible the use of existing inclinations... And yet, as a path to happiness, work is not highly prized by men."[19] Marx's great achievement, from this perspective, was to open the possibility of a society in which the majority of people need not be driven to work only under the press of necessity. This is the society to which Marcuse refers when he suggests the possibility of "non-repressive sublimation."[20] In this case, sexuality would not be blocked or deflected from its object, but rather in attaining its object, transcend it to others. Under these conditions, Marcuse argues that sexuality could tend to grow into eros in a broader sense through what he terms the re-sexualizing of work. He argues this may become a real possibility, thus eroticizing the body as a whole. These, then are some important features of the third aspect of eros, the pleasure derived from acting in the world.[21] The making of one out of more than one, sensuality in a broad sense, and finally, the pleasure of competent activity -- all represent aspects of eros.

Eros, Domination, and Community

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19 Civilization and Its Discontents, p. 27.

20 See Herbert Marcuse, Eros and Civilization (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), p.211.

21 See Marcuse, pp. 220,222. I differ with him on the possibilities for a "re-sexualized work" since it seems that the pleasure of acting on the world is in itself an "erotic " one.

What does all this have in common with accounts of power? A close examination will demonstrate that, like power relations, relations structured by eros involve the establishment of relations with others; they, like exercises of power over others, represent the creation of community. This community may be fragile and instrumental, or deep-going and intrinsically valuable to its members. The form of the community depends fundamentally on the vision of human nature and human sociality it expresses, and thus, on the mode of interaction within it. A community based on reciprocity among equals could become a community in the fullest sense of the term.--a sense perhaps similar to Rousseau's vision of the social contract community or Marx's vision of communism.

The possibilities for even imagining such a community are drastically reduced if the world is seen as populatd not by fellow beings who may share our aims and desires but by hostile Others, whose aims and desires can be expected to run counter to our own. This is of course the vision the interest theorists have adopted, one which has been shown to result in justifications for domination. The significance of the population of hostile Others for an understanding of power is illustrated in Ursula LeGuin's statement about the treatment of the 'alien' in science fiction. She has suggested that there is an important relation beteen the treatment of aliens in science fiction and the treatment of groups who are considered to be somehow "other." The alien can of course be sexually, racially, culturally, or socially different. It can be hateful or helpful; and our fear of it may take the form of either hatred or reverence. But LeGuin sees the heart of the issue very clearly: "If you deny

any affinity with another person or kind of person, if you declare it to be wholly different from yourself, as men have done to women, and class has done to class, and nation has done to nation, you may hate it or deify it, but in either case you have denied its spiritual equality and its human reality. You have made it into a thing to which the only possible relationship is a power relationship and thus you have fatally impoverished your own reality. You have, in fact alienated yourself."[22] By extension, if our world is populated by alien beings presumed to be hostile and alien to oneself, the only possible human relations are those of domination and subordination.

In a world of hostile and threatening others, each aspect of eros can assume forms of domination rather than reciprocal fusion. For example, the desire for fusion with another can take the form of domination of the other. In this form, the desire for fusion leads to the only possible fusion with a threatening Other; this occurs when the Other ceases to exist as a separate, and for that reason threatening, Other. Only when , for example a woman ceases to exist as a separate and therefore threatening individual, is the fusion possible. This is one source of the linkage between death and domination in our culture.[23]

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22 Ursula LeGuin, "American SF and the Other," in Science Fiction Studies I, 3 (November, 1975) 208-9, cited in Pamela Sargent, "Introduction" More Women of Wonder (New York: Vintage, 1976) xxxiv-xxxv.

23 The 'otherness' of woman described so well by de Beauvoir represents a critical aspect of the Western understanding of power.

The second aspect of eros, too, can take a repressive form. --the denial of sensuality and bodily pleasures. Plato's view of the proper relation between the soul and the body represents one of the clearest statements of contempt for the physical and sensual aspect of human existence. Indeed, Plato sometimes treats the body and its needs as a kind of foreign intruder on the soul.[24] One psychologist has commented that "the loathing and disgust that we feel for what we cannot help being interested in is our homage to the reasons we had for burying the interest."[25] From this perspective, Plato's denial of the body, and his substituion of love of beauty, or love of philosophy represent the repression and sublimation of sensuality.

The third aspect of eros, too, that of creativity and generation, can also take the form of domination. The clearest examples occur in the world of work, where what could have been empowering and creative activity in conjunction with external nature becomes alienated labor in industries which pollute and destroy both their natural surroundings and the minds and bodies of those who labor. As Freud so clearly pointed out, persons must either sublimate the erotic joys of creative work in professional work, or

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23 See for a more complete account George Bataille, Sensuality and Death (New York: Walker and Co., 1962) and Dinnerstein, pp134-136 on the ways in which eros deflected from the life of the body results in a morbid fascination with death and excrement.

24 See below, especially the sections referring to the Symposium and the Phaedrus.

25 Dinnerstein, p. 135.

must be driven to work by the force of necessity. And as for the external world of nature, to the extent that it is seen not as a means of affirming the actor, but as a threat to his/her continued existence, then that relation too must take the form of domination. Eros, then, in each of these forms, represents a societal choice between domination and community.

Western civilization has most frequently recognized only one side of eros--that which can only participate in relations with others in the form of relations of domination and submissions; this parallels the recognition of power almost exclusively in its form as power over others. Modern Western understandings of power (or, more precisely, power over others) can be read as attempts to solve the problem of community in a world populated by hostile Others.[26]

This situation takes extreme form for the warrior-hero in the Homeric poems. So long as the Homeric warrior-hero -- in his many guises -- defines the nature of the human community, we will face a situation in which domination must be a substitute for community, and

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26 This will be shown to be a a masculine attempt to solve the problem of community. As to why I should characterize it as a pecualiraly masculine attempt, let me mention here the work of Nancy Chodorow which suggests that men's ego boundaries are more rigid than those of women. This conduses to the development of a more dichotomous world view. See Nancy Chodorow, "Family Structure and Female Personality," in in Rosaldo and Lamphere, Woman, Culture, and Society (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974). See also Adrienne Rich, Of Woman Born (New York: Norton, 1976), and her descriptions of the experience of the pregnant woman experiencing the presence of another who is both "me and not-me". (See esp. pp. 36,64,67,167.)
On the basis of these accounts, one would be able to conclude that women's psychological possibilities for constructing relations with others--constructing a community--are far less limited than men's.

which sensuality takes the form of thanatos or death and destruction. To support this claim, I will examine some ancient sources which can clarify the essential nature of the warrior hero and can make him recognizable in his more contemporary guise.[27] These sources explicitly see the female as a disruptive force in the male community. They faced head-on the need to deal with the chaos and disorder she brought; the need to construct a masculine world of order and light that would be safe for man, because it was protected from woman, (and from her more figurative female relatives) a world of order and light whose most fundamental principles were domination and hierarchy. We will find this vision, this refraction of the social relations, built into the very founding of the polis--at least its mythic founding. The operative model throughout is that of the warrior hero engaged in combat.

Power is intimately connected with (and indeed becomes an aspect of) masculinity in the person of the warrior hero . He later becomes the citizen who engages in rhetorical competition, and most recently, the hero has taken the form of the capitalist entrepreneur who competes in the market for victory or death (now termed somewhat more prosaically, "going out of business.") If this is true, then, to the extent that our modern understanding of politics and power springs

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27 Fifth century Athens represents an important and especially fascinating period in which to examine the role of the "other" in political thought, since the role of women was the subject, if not of public debate, at least of public comment. As presented in the work of thinkers such as Plato or Aristotle, citizens were participants in public life. The others--women, slaves, barbarians-- were consigned to the realm of necessity which surrounded and both threatened and supported the public, political space of the polis.

from this lineage-- i.e. from the ancient Greeks, the Republican tradition in Western Europe, and the recreation of the warrior-hero as bourgeois or capitalist, we too suffer from a fragile and fundamentally unsatisfactory community.[28] Women as women are prevented from participating, and the male warrior hero participates only as a truncated human being.

Marxist critics might object that my account ignores the differing social relations of different modes of production. Each mode of production they would argue has its own social relations and throws up its own set of ideas to match. However, there are in fact some important connections between the different modes of production identified by Marx: The domination of women on the basis of their sex is common to all. While slave society, feudalism, and capitalism are all class societies--societies which depend on the exploitation of the many by the few, they are also all societies in which women of all classes were subject to men. The power of men over women differed from feudalism to capitalism, but conversely an understanding of the mode of reproduction common to both could allow us to investigate how relations between classes were shaped in important ways by the continuing hostility to the female. The effects this has had on developing the fear of the female have been well documented.[29] Marxist critics may argue as well that the real

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28 Compare, for example Marx's statement in the Communist Manifesto that the bourgeois had created a world after his own image, and had subjugated the powers of nature to an unprecedented degree, but had found himself in command of forces he did not know how to control.

problems about politics and power and about sexuality and domination in our culture are problems of social relations and therefore cannot be illuminated by an investigation of the history of ideas. Although this is an essay about understanding and ideas, it is also implicitly about social relations. Marx and Engels argued persuasively that the ruling ideas of a society are "nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships; that is, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas, hence the relations which make one class the ruling one. Therefore, the ideas of its dominance."[30] That is, ideas express real social relations; ideas about the world are not random but grow--in complex and mediated ways to be sure--from real experience.[31]

My argument here, in sum, is that the fusion of eros and domination represents a peculiarly masculine attempt to solve the problem of community in a world of hostile Others. However, this effort fails because it rests on a distorted theory of human nature and human sociality. It can only result in the creation of a fragile and fundamentally unsatisfactory community. The community is fragile in part because the warrior-hero is a brittle and fragile creature, not only threatened on all sides by those against whom he fights, but also in danger from the natural world, and especially from the world

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29 See Dinnerstein, The Mermaid and the Minotaur, and Nancy Chodorow, The Reproduction of Mothering (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

30 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology (New York: International Publishers, 1960), p. 65.

of women. The sources of these threats must be subjugated. From this perspective, the polis represents the community built to protect the warrior-heroes from these threats--a community based on its maleness (even, perhaps, machismo). It segregates the female forces--both material and figurative-- and also splits off the female forces within each man, represented traditionally by the bodily and the appetitive parts of their humanness.[32] The forces which hold this fragile community together are the same as those which threaten to destroy it. The eros which holds it together may break it apart unless it is disembodied and sublimated; and competition for

dominance must be ritualized, lest it become the all out war of each against all. Both processes create tensions between citizens and even within citizens.

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Georg Thomson and Alvin Gouldner, for example have attempted to link some features of Greek life to their social relations. While I am not persuaded by their cases, they are instructive. Thomson, for example, suggests that the Phythagorean doctrine of the fusion of opposites in the mean was generated by the rise of the middle classs to act as a balance beteen the land-owners and the peasants. The aristocracy and common people were balanced by the wealth of the new middle class. What Hesiod had understood as a struggle without the possibility of victory in this life, by Pythagoras' time had become a possible cessation of the struggle. (See George Thomson, [Aeschylus and Athens (London: Lawrence and Wishart, Ltd, 1941), pp. 214-219.] Gouldner in contrast calls attention to the relation of social life to thought in another way. He suggests that Plato's world view is structured by a covert analogy with slavery. Plato's views about slavery, the state, the individual and the cosmos all follow a single, hierarchic pattern. Because Plato's world view has the master-slave relation at its heart, Plato sees the orderly world constructed/imposed by the master as constantly threatened by disorder--the disorder of a slave who lacks logos. Gouldner argues that disorderliness is always experienced in relatin to one's own ends. The behavior of the slave only seems disorderly and unpredictable from the point of view of the master's (and not the slave's) ends. [Alvin Gouldner, Enter Plato (New York: Basic Books, 1965), pp. 351-355.] One could look as well at the argument by Wood and Wood that political theory represents practical proposals concerning political and social institutions and actions. [Class Ideology and Ancient Political Theory. (Oxford: London, 1978),p. 3.] My purpose here is not to defend these particular theses; indeed, I tend to differ with both arguments. Rather, I hope to call attention to the implications of the argument I put forward-- to stress the importance of dualism in the lives and thought of of a number of important political thinkers, and to put forward the argument that the most fundamental dualism experienced by the ancient Greeks was the sexual division between women and men.

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One can find enormous amounts of support for this claim in the works of Plato and Aristotle. See also Victoria Spellman, "Metaphysics and Misogyny: The Soul and Body in Plato's Dialogues," Unpublished manuscript available from the author. (Dept. of Philosophy, Amherst College, Amherst, Ma.)

Plato's Symposium can serve as our guide as we explore the evolution from Homeric warrior-hero to citizen (and finally to philosopher). The speakers in this competition cum dialogue replicate in at least rough form the evolution from the Homeric hero through the role of the citizen in the founding of the polis, to the final repression/sublimation of eros in the philosophers's love of beauty.[33] They present an excellent view of the effort to subject the female forces within each man to the control of forces conceived of as male, and of the operation of a ritualized and rationalized eros between citizens. At the same time, the vision of the Symposium is one which attempts to move eros away from the disorderly realm of the physical and toward reason, away from bodily concerns and toward those of the soul (ultimately, toward the divine.) Only when it is cleansed of enough of its bodily impurities can it take its place as an honorable tie between citizens.

The dialog takes place at a communal feast, one which usually included a drinking contest. (In this particular instance, the participants swear they will not repeat their exploits of the night before). The conversation turns to love and each participant is required to make a speech on the subject which will improve on those that went before.

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33 Although this progression may sound a bit extreme, another commentator has suggested that in reading the Symposium, one should replace the term "lover" with "hero". (See Stanley Rosen, Plato's Symposium (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968),p.52.

Phaedrus and Pausanius begin the discussion--both taking up the dualism of reason and desire, mind and body, the sense that love can function as a kind of possession by an alien invader. In addition, they stress the importance of reputation--a concern clearly in tune with the ancient shame culture of Homeric times.[34] Phaedrus stresses the links between eros and military virtue. He argues, for example that the lover would be unable to bear that his beloved shold find him in an inglorious act, or, worse, in submission to "ill-usage". He turns directly to the military possibilities in this, and suggests that if a city or army were composed of none but lovers and beloved, they might well conquer the world. "For the lover would rather anyone than his beloved should see him leave the ranks or throw away his arms in flight".[35] He makes explicit the relation of eros and the warrior-hero when he argues that Homer's statement that some god "breathed might" into one of the heroes is in reality a reference to the power of love in the heart of the lover. Moreover, Phaedrus is impressed not only with the willingness of the lover to die for the beloved, but also with his wish to avenge him.

This speech is followed by that of Pausanius, who, although he presents the appearance of disagreeing, carries forward the argument Phaedrus had begun. His contribution focuses on the dualism of mind

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[34] See M.I. Finley, The World of Odyseuss (Baltimore: Penguin, 1979); See also E.R. Dodds, The Greeks and the Irrational (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951). Dodds sees far more of a transformation from shame to guilt culture than I. Interestingly enough, these same themes appear prominently in the Phaedrus as well.

[35] Symposium, tr.Michael Joyce, 179:a

and body and the proper ordering of the two in the worthy lover. Pausanius also carries on theme of honor and shame, to argue that there is no shame in submission in the case of one who serves another in the belief that he will find an increase of wisdom or other virtue. Pausanius suggests that there are two sorts of love: There was the heavenly Aphrodite, who represents a higher sort of love and the common Aphrodite, who represents a common sort of love. Common love is described as the love that inferior men feel, a love that works at random. They may "love firstly women as well as boys; next, when they love, they love bodies rather than souls." The association of maleness with mind and reason is clear in this passage.[36]

Common Aphrodite is described as much younger than the other goddess and as having had a share of both male and female in her birth. The share of the female is responsible for the sensual, bodily concerns of this kind of love. The other love, the higher goddess, had no share of the female but only the male. She is the elder, and does not inspire violent passions. Those inspired by this goddess feel affection for boys who have shown signs of intelligence--signs which usually appear with the first growth of beard.[37] The Symposium can be read as an account of how sexuality

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36 Ibid., 180B-182C. The association of the two was also shared by Aristotle. See his discussion of human reproduction in De Generatione Animalium.

37 Ibid., 181d.

can be incorporated into the public life of the polis. But the eros which has a place in public life differs profoundly from that appropriate to the oikos.[38] There is, then, an important distinction between the man who is the common lover, who loves the body rather than the soul, who loves what is material and not lasting, and the lover of higher things. Those things associated with the bodily, and with the female world are seen as subordinate to the things associated with maleness and the higher world. Love of bodies interferes with and disrupts the pleasures of the soul.

The Symposium progresses through Eryximachus' and Aristophanes' development of the theme of harmonization, reconcilation of opposites, and the search for fusion with another. Both speeches form the basis for the sublimation and final disembodiment of eros in the speech of Socrates/Diotima. Eryximachus accepts the dichotomy of love as described by Pausanius, but argues that love is a kind of harmony or resolution of conflict. If this is so, he suggests, then the creation of such harmony is an art. Thus, such things as medecine, his own art, or music are "under the sole direction of the god of love."[39] Aristophanes,once again claiming to take the

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38 In the same context, the Republic may be seen as an attempt to take over the household with the public world. Plato does away with the oikos both as a form of property and as an ordering of sexual relations--at least for the guradian class. The solution to the oikos/polis conflict in the Republic then, concerns sexuality as well as the property which served as an entree into Greek politics.

39 Ibid., 187a

argument in a different direction, both reinforces the argument about the dichotomous nature of love and develops the idea of harmony, mediation and reconcilation with his story of the original three human sexes. The original male, female, and mixed-sex creatures, each now sliced in half by Zeus, "attempt to redintegrate our former nature, to make two into one, and to bridge the gulf between one human being and another." This fusion is a weak reflection of the dream of being a single and harmonius whole with one's beloved.[40]

Agathon and Socrates/Diotima move the consideration of *eros* toward the disembodied love of truth or wisdom, and the vision of *eros* as the mediator between, or reconciler of, ignorance and truth. Agathon contributes an argument that love, however heroic, is a poet versed in all the creative arts.[41] It is, he argues, longing and desire which have led to the development of all the arts. Socrates carries the case still further. *Eros* is a mediator between mortal and immortal. He can fulfill this role through his longing for the beautiful--a longing apparent in all the arts, because the longing for the beautiful and the good, is, as well, a longing for immortality.[42] Significantly, Diotima states that this longing for immortality takes the forms both of procreation and a desire for

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[40] *Ibid*,., 192e

[41] *Ibid.*, 196:d

[42] *Ibid.*, 207a See Also *Ibid.*, 204c-205d.

"eternal mention in the deathless role of fame."[43] "For the sake of fame they will dare greater dangers , even, than for their children; they are ready to spend their money like watter and to wear their fingers to the bone, and, if it comes to that,to die." Moreover, she adds, those who hope for this endless fame are more noble than others because they are "in love with the eternal."[44] Only some men, however, are capable of achieving this latter kind of immortality; here the discussion once again supports the dichotomous vision of male and female, soul and body, reason and appetite, and strikingly reinforces the hierarchical relation between them. Socrates presents Diotima's argument that all men are pregnant in both body and soul. Those who are pregnant in body turn to women, and raise a family, in the hope that they are securing immortality, memory and happiness. In contrast those who are pregnant in soul conceive and bear such things as wisdom and all her sister virtues. This group can attach themselves to others (beautiful in both body and soul), and bear more beautiful and immortal children than others; and as Socrates/Diotima says, "who would not prefer such fatherhood to merely human propagation, if he stopped to think of Homer, and Hesiod, and all the greatest of our poets. Who would not envy them their immortal progeny, their claim on the admiration of posterity. "[45]

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[43] Ibid., 208:c

[44] Ibid., 208:e

[45] Ibid., 209d.

The Pythagorean and Aristotelian accounts of paternity are clearly at work here. There is an opposition of creativity to fertility-- the one a male capacity, the other a female property.[46] In the Symposium the male begetting offspring is involved in an art. Even the common lover who begets mortal children is involved in a creative act. But the pregnancy of the women is of the body in a literal sense.[47] Socrates/Diotima simply take the argument further, and add that just as the soul is the proper ruler of the body, the creations of the soul are more beautiful than the creations of the body. Here, the citizen becomesd disembodied. Procreation involves only the sopirit; the flesh is irrelevant

What does all this say about eros, community, and the fusion of virility and domination? The Symposium recapitulates the mutation of the warrior-hero for whom eros is primarily important as a source of military valor, a source for the courage to risk the death of the body, into the aristocratic Athenian citizen, for whom eros solves the problems created by the experience of a dichotomous existence in the form of harmonization or reconciliation of oppositions. For the latter it represents the search for internal wholeness and unity--a unity which cannot be achieved by mere suppression of one

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46 See Froma I Zeitlin, "The Dynamics of Misogyny in the Oresteia," Arethusa (Spring and Fall, 1978), p. 171

47 Aristotle codifies the view that even in the creation of human children, woman provides the matter for the creation and man provides the form. It is the man's soul which contributes form to the child. (See Horowitz, "Aristotle and Woman," Journal of the History of Biology IX,2 (Fall,1976) 197.)

side of the dichotomy but requires the incorporation of that aspect in some subordinate form. This solution, too, is fragile and unsatisfactory. For Plato, only philosophy presents a definitive solution to the problems represented by eros. The bodily component is dropped entirely: the lover now needs no body at all for procreation.

The nature of the community itself is changed through this evolution of eros and the differing interactions to which it gives rise. It is the eros of the community which lies at the heart of its life as a community. The transitions found in the Symposium suggest that the form taken by eros indicates the fundamental structure of the community itself. Let us expand on this suggestion by pursuing the eros of the male community to its literary source in Homer, where it takes the form of a community of warriors, or, more precisely, of warrior-heroes.

The Homeric Warrior-Hero and the Founding of the Polis

The Homeric epics set the stage for this dichotomous (and precarious) political world. The image of the hero emerges from the Iliad and the Odyssey, where the battlefield is the stage on which the action takes place. It is inhabited solely by men, and heroism is the supremely masculine role. The burden of Homeric combat is the responsibility of only a few heroic men. In the role of the Hero, one finds the same tensions and conflicts which structure the polis in later centuries. The political community as community exists only on the battlefield, where the collective good can be the primary concern of the hero.[48] The community both sustains and provides for the warrior hero and sends him to possible death. Because of the

warrior's role on the edge of the community, Redfield argues that the warrior stands on the "frontier between culture and nature.[49] Because of this privileged position, culture appears for the warrior in what is perhaps its true form-- a"translucent screen against the terror of nature."[50] Yet the warrior-hero was also the head of a household made up primarily of women and was a carrier of the private and particular interests of that household. The ethic of warrior and householder conflict: the warrior must be prepared to achieve fame undying through glorious victory or glorious death; the householder must preserve or perhaps cautiously expand his property. There is a conflict beteen loyalty to the community and to the family. To meet the first set of obligations, the warrior-hero must be ready to die, but to meet his obligations as a householder, he must survive.[51]

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48 One can see the links with Arendt's concept of power as action in concert, and some of the attendant problems. But, as one scholar has pointed out, the community can only be secured by combat, which is, after all, the negation of the community.

49 James Redfield, Nature and Culture in the Iliad: The Tragedy of Hector (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 101. See also M.I. Finley, The World of Odysseus pp. 74-85.

50 Redfield, p. 103. Redfield does not touch on the question of why nature should be so terrifying--an important statement in and of itself about the extent to which we share the Greek world view.

51 Ibid., pp.124-125.

In addition to the dichotomies between nature and culture, household and political community, the warrior-hero experienced the conflict between the collective good as an end in itself, and as an instrument of his own glory and honor. The highest good for the warrior hero is not, as even Socrates/Diotima point out, a quiet conscience, but rather the enjoyment of public esteem, and through this esteem, immortality. Honor, or timé is central. Thus, Achilles can ask "Why should I fight, if the good fighter receives no more timé than the bad?"[52]

Just as the warrior-hero faced the conflicts between community and nature in extreme form on the battle-field, so he faces this dualism in extreme form in his soul. He fights to win reputation as well as to preserve the community. It is perhaps the importance of public reputation thay leads to the externalization of emotional emotions. If to "lose face" is unbearable, how then can one explain the actions one would be ashamed to acknowledge as one's own? E.R. Dodds has suggested that in such circumstances, the society may well allow individuals to project these feelings and actions onto some divine agency. The dichotomy is so extreme in Homer, that the emotions are seen as detached entities responsible for até, a kind of temporary insanity or clouding of the normal consciousness in which the hero behaves in ways he can give no good account of. Significantly, of the three agencies to which até is ascribed, two, are female. Zeus is the primary source, but the female figures of

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[52] See Dodds, pp. 17-18, citing IL. 9,315ff.

the Moirae and the Erinyes are also capable of inducing até.[53] The hero must struggle against these female forces--but with little hope of victory. They are stronger than he. The dualism, then, between male and female within the person of the warrior-hero is made into a dichotomy between the person himself, and supernatural and alien forces which may overcome him from time to time.

The Homeric warrior-hero, then, contained within his person and situation many of the contradictory forces which would come to full significance in the life of the Athenian citizen. But the citizen and the hero are not one and the same. The transition from the tribal world of the Homeric heroes to the world of the polis is marked in mythological terms by the Oresteia of Aeschylus in the fifth century b.c., a series of three plays which can be most instructive for our purposes. The transition required was a great one, from what was basically a stratified tribal society to a settled, class divided community.

These plays can be read as a mythic reconstruction of the founding of the polis and (in the process), an important development of Western understandings of politics and power. Most fundamentally, the establishment of the polis (and thus, the beginning of Western

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53 My discussion owes much to Dodds, Chapter I. He argues that moira in this context refers to portion rather than to the Fates. Still, the female connotations should not be ignored. Dodds also notes the intellectual form given to explanations of behavior. One is said to "know" not only technical things, but also things concerning moral character. From this perspective, the Socratic paradoxes such as "virtue is knowledge" are the culmination of an ingrained pattern of thought. (See p. 17).

ideas about politics and political power) takes place through a process of domesticating and subordinating the dangerous and threatening female forces which surround what is to become the political comunity. Where for the warrior in battle, these were the forces of a hostile "nature", the forces responsible for atē, or human enemy seen in that guise, now they have taken on a distinctly female shape. The speeches of Eryximachus and Aristophanes in the Symposium recapitulate this phase of the evolution in their stress on the search for wholeness, and on harmonization of opposites as the basis for community.

As Aeschylus tells the story, Agamemnon, in order to get good winds and victory in battle, sent home for his daughter, Iphyginia, with a promise that he had arranged her marriage, only to sacrifice her when she arrived, "heedless of her tears" because "her judges valued more their glory and their war" than the life of a woman.[54] The glories to be had in combat and the willingness to pay almost any price for them is a recurring theme in both the heroic poems and the politics whose birth they attended.

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54 Aeschylus Oresteian Trilogy tr. Philip Vellacott (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1956), p. 50. There are, however, some important fifth century additions to the story, noted by both Thomson and Slater. What was for Homer a simple fight about the succession becomes a story of women out kill their husbands. In addition one should note that Slater reports that if attention given to a dramatic character is a measure of his popularity, Orestes was by far the most favored figure of fifth century Athens. (See Thomson, Aeschylus and Athens, p. 248. See also Philip Slater, The Glory of Hera (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), p. 137.

When Agamemnon returned from the war, Clytemnestra, his wife, killed him in vengeance, and their son,Orestes, killed his mother in revenge. In Aeschylus' play, Orestes is urged to do the deed by Apollo, the god of light, and the mythic representation of the male principle.[55] Orestes, after killing his mother, justifies the deed by saying that he belongs to his father, not his mother. His mother is a "treacherous web" that killed his father, a "pollution,"[56] and therefore Orestes argues that he has committed no sin. But the Furies, the avengers of infractions in the tribal code of vengeance, come after him. They are female figures of darkness and chaos from beneath the earth. Orestes describes them in terms of what might be termed by the more psycho-analytically oriented, "primitive masculine fears." They are creatures with snakes coiled around their bodies, "living horrors" , "avenging hounds incensed by a mothers's blood."[57]

> "Women, I think I call them rather gorgons, only not
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> gorgons either, since their shape is not the same.
>
> ...no

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55 But note that in the version of Euripides, Electra, it is she who urges him to do the deed. He is so weak he is almost incapable of any act without the asistance of a god or a woman or, as we will see, both. (See Slater, The Glory of Hera on this point)

56 Oresteia,, p. 141.

57 Ibid., pp. 159

wings, that could be seen; they are black and utterly repulsive, and they snore with breath that drives one back. From their eyes drips the foul ooze, and their dress is such as is not right to wear in the presence of the gods' statues....[58]

The Erinyes are avengers of matricide: for them, Clytemnestra's crime in killing her husband is a lesser offense than Orestes' crime in killing his mother. Since she was Orestes' blood relation, and no relation to Agamemnon, the latter's death must be a lesser crime. Through the intervention of Apollo, the god of light and order, Orestes, pursued by the Erinyes, flees to Athens with the promise that he will be delivered from his difficulties. Both parties present themselves to Athena for judgement, and she calls the Athenian jurors into session.

Apollo himself presents Orestes' defense, a statement of the new and patriarchal code of the city state as opposed to the more ancient tribal laws. Apollo argues that Agamemnon's death was awful. He was a king and a woman killed him; worse, it was not an Amazon who killed him in battle, but his own wife who killed him at home. It was not a manly death. Apollo goes on to argue against the

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[58] Oresteia, Lattimore tr. (University of Chicago: Chicago, 1953), p. 136.

matrilineal rules defended by the Erinyes. He argues that the mother is not the real parent of the child but only a "nurse who tends the growth of the young seed planted by its true parent, the male."[59] So "if fate spares the child, she keeps it as one might keep for some friend a growing plant."[60] And then he offers the following: "And of this truth/ that the father without mother may beget, we have/ present as proof, the daughter of Olympian Zeus: one never nursed in the dark cradle of the womb." This is of course a reference to the myth that Athena sprang from Zeus's forehead. The jurors are deadlocked, and significantly, while they wait for the verdict, Orestes prays to "bright Apollo", and the Furies to "mother night." Finally, it is Athena who makes the judgement favor of Orestes: because of her own position as motherless, she says she will support "the father's claim/and male supremacy in all things."[61]

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59 Oresteian Trilogy (Penguin), p. 169.

60 This is of course a restatement of the influential Pythagorean view, and also of the Aristotelian view. See Thomson, Aeschylus and Athens, p. 288; Marilyn Cline Horowitz, "Aristotle and Woman," p. 194 on the plant analogy, and 198-202 on the vision of the female as a mutilated male.

61 The Oresteian Trilogy, p. 172. Significantly, she makes one exception to this support of male supremacy-- the giving of herself in marriage. One could spend a great deal of time on the mythic role of Greek virgins. See for example, Thompson, Aeschylus and Athens, pp. 282-283.

The finding in favor of male supremacy enrages the Furies who threaten vengeance on Athens. But Athena calms them, promises them a home, a cavern of their own, and a role in the city. Their task , will be to dispose of all mortal ways, and to help households prosper. That is, they are to concern themselves with everyday life, with the household realm of production, with tasks traditionally within the sphere of women. They are not to concern themselves with immortality, philosophy, or war--the sphere of men and divine virgins in the new state.

The Oresteia has held continuing interest for a number of feminist theorists. Simone de Beauvoir and Kate Millett have seen it as the mythic rendering of a patriarchal takeover.[62] Philip Slater has used it to uncover the psychology of the Greek mother/son relation. Georg Thomson, from a Marxist perspective, has seen it as a mythic account of the beginnings of Greek democracy, which, based as it was on a system of private property, required the subjection of women.[63] Froma Zeitlin argues that while Thomson and Slater are

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62 Simone de Beauvoir The Second Sex (New York: Knopf, 1953), tr. H.M. Parshley p. 73; Kate Millett, Sexual Politics (Garden City: Doubleday, 1970), pp. 111-115.

63 Thomson suggests that this consequence was recognized even by contemporaries of Aeschylus; Both Aristophanes and Plato saw that the abolition of private property would involve the emancipation of women. See Slater, The Glory of Hera, pp. 161-193; Thomson, Aeschylus and Athens, p. 288; Winspear makes a different argument and sees Pythagoras as an aristocrat. But Thomson argues that the later Pythagoreans were reactionaries (p. 291). See also Alban Dewes Winspear, The Genesis of Plato's Thought (New York: S.A. Russell, 1940).

correct to focus on the problem of justice in the Oresteia--although from very different perspectives-- the more important issue is the way the male/female conflict is transformed into a struggle between the new and progressive male world and the old and reactionary female world.[64]

My reading of these plays indicates that any male takeover involved a number of complex social chages and conceptual shifts--many of which became central to the Western understandng of politics and power. The outcome of Orestes' trial suggests that Athens as a polis, a public and political arena, depended in a vital way on the domestication of female forces of disorder-- forces whose symbolic sources are the earth and the night. The danger these female forces presented to the polis is accentuated by Aeschylus' complex presentation of the dangers the female presents to the community.[65] The unruly female threatens the fragile male community in several ways: First, Clytemnestra's role is contained within the older ethic of the blood vendetta. Even within the context of the older tribal order, a female response to provocation could be expected to exceed the proper (here read male) response and lead to disequilibrium.[66] It can even bring society to a halt. Second, in

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64 She argues that the two spheres must be assimilated before male can triumph over female. My own reading however suggests that these two spheres are never assimilated. See Froma I. Zeitlin, "The Dynamics of Misogyny in the Oresteia", 165.

65 Philip Slater makes this case in "The Greek Family in History and Myth," Arethusa VII,1 (Spring, 1974).

the Eumenides, the female principle now in the form of the Furies instead of Clytemnestra, is presented as part of the archaic, "old religion" . It is primitive , lawless, regressive, and tied to the forces of earth and nature, while the male, "bright Apollo", is seen as leading toward the future--law abiding, orderly, and by implication part of the world of reason. Because of the danger the female presents to the male world, the plays can be read as a statement of the importance fifth century Athenians gave to domesticating the forces of disorder. Failing this domestication, they feared, the male community could not survive.[67]

The polis is mythically founded on the new, explicitly patriarchal religion of the Olympian Gods: the meaning of the transition to this new religion is made clear in the images of the opposition of light to darkness, Apollo to the Furies. The Athenian jury which decides Orestes' fate replaces the blood feud. The conflict between Orestes and Clytemnestra, the Furies and Apollo, and by implication between Zeus and the Moirae , manifest the earthly process of moving from tribe to state.[68] More is involved, however, than the transition to class society. The patriarchy has, in a

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66 Zeitlin, p. 156.

67 Zeitlin puts it well: "The pacification of the Erinyes becomes the ideological effort to solve the dilemma of the inextricable connection between female fertility and female sexuality, between female beneficence and female malevolence,..." (Ibid.,p. 159) The problem of female duality has had important impacts on thought, and social structure, most recently documented by Dorothy Dinnerstein in The Mermaid and the Minotaur

sense, increased its controls through the double means of the Athenian jury, a group of the wisest citizens (the future Council of the Areopagus) and Athena, a benevolent female figure without whose intervention Orestes (and by implication even Apollo) could not have won the trial. The disorderly female figures are so dangerous that even a man aided by a god cannot control them. Yet the end of the Eumenides implies that the polis cannot exist without these unruly female figures. Unless the Furies can be persuaded to accept a role in the community, they might destroy it.[69] On the other hand, because the polis is constituted as a political body, through its conflict with the female forces of disorder, these female forces cannot be given a role in the polis itself. Despite the fact that they are essential to its existence and proper functioning, the fragile male community must create a safe space for itself. At the same time, it cannot ignore its own need for continuance, and indeed, cannot ignore the forces of life represented by the female.

There is yet another aspect of the Oresteia which deserves mention. The polis is established not only in opposition to unruly female forces, but in opposition to nature. Just as the Homeric warrior-hero lived on the boundary between nature and culture, and confronted nature as a hostile force, so the polis draws its

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68 Thomson argues that this is the beginning of the reign of law. I would argue it represents a mythic representation of a change in a mode of production-- from tribal society to a class state. See Thomson, p. 289.

69 It is interesting to compare this solution to the Pythagorean doctrine of the fusion of opposites in the mean.

boundaries against a hostile (and female) nature which must be subdued. The Furies, for example, are explicitly associated with the earth and fertility. Moreover, the nature to be subdued is both internal and external. And not only must the outside world be defended against, but the inner nature of each individual must also be controlled. Freud recognized the importance of this opposition to nature when he noted that the founding of the polis , especially the turning from mother, to father, "signifies a victory of intellectuality over the senses." Thus he ranges himself on the side of those who argue that civilization itself depends on controlling of the forces of disorder within the individual.[70] The Oresteia, then, can be read as an account of the establishment of a harmonious and unitary whole, a whole in which the different parts take their proper plce, and in which female is subordinate to male, body to soul, and emotion to reason.

The Nature of the Athenian Political Community

What are the social relations, or rather, the ideological refractions of these social relations which emerge from the mythic confrontation of darkness and light? And what do they tell us about power and sexuality? I will argue that on the basis of a reading of some works of Plato, Aristotle, and Aristophanes, we will be able to

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70 Freud, Civilization And Its Discontents. Zeitlin, "The Dynamics of Misogyny..." presents a useful tabulation of the male/female polarization in Greek thought-- a polarization which put reason and the appetities in opposition to each other, and which associated reason with the male, and appetites with the female and which required that the stronger of the two opposing forces should control the weaker. Ideally, reason should control the appetites. (See esp. p. 171.).

highlight the extent to which the polis both carried on the heroic ideal in which the virtues of citizenship require valor in battle in wartime and courage in rhetorical competition in peacetime, and attempted to reconcile and ritualize the conflicts to which this gave rise.

Fame and honor and glory in both situations were to be gained at the price of another losing his fame, honor, and glory.[71] The continued importance of military imagery in the political vocabulary is striking. The centrally important terms of commendation for the Athenians were aretē and agathos. Both were terms which commended military bravery and success in war. To be agathos is above all to be independent of the constraint of another-- due, it is implied, to one's military success. As daily life moved away from the battlefield, the nature of the combat among citizens changed, but retained its character of competition or contest, the object of which was to achieve as much recognition as possible especially among the group of fellow citizens who could be considered contestants in the same game.

If the object is to win more public prestige or fame than all the other "players," one can do so through victorious participation in wars, through threats, or through inducing others to enter into situations where their performance may be compared to one's own. The

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71 Slater notes that one is struck repeatedly by the zero-sum nature of Athenian competition; the "twin delicacies of daily life were to achieve revenge and to arouse envy." (See Slater, "The Greek Family..." pp. 25, 35-36; See also Gouldner, Enter Plato, pp. 48-50.

amount of fame the citizen/warrior can win depends importantly on the ranking of his fellow contestants. The greater the rank of the loser in any competition, the greater the value of a victory over that man. The point, to the citizen/warrior, is not to increase his own fame in a general sense, but rather to increase the difference between his fame and glory and that of his equals, his competitors.[72]

The fundamental dualism of the Homeric poems continued to structure political life. The opposition of polis both to nature and to female forces continued to dominate thought, though not necessarily in such overt forms. The shape of this opposition in the ideology of the city state is once again recapitulated in the Symposium when Agathon and Socrates/Diotima move the discussion toward the definition of eros as the disembodied love of truth and beauty, and the mediator between mortal and immortal. Plato's concept of reason acts to disembody the good citizen by means of aiding in the proper ordering of the soul. The good citizen will be a being on whom bodily needs, appetites, and emotions cannot intrude. One can now begin to see some of the possible significance of both the association of reason with the male and of the particular Platonic (and to a lesser extent Aristotelian) conception of reason. Plato views human beings as part of the world of nature, and therefore as materials the planner must work against, rather than with-- materials on which the planner must impose himself, since they

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72 Gouldner, Enter Plato pp. 48-53 documents this feature of Greek life.

are disorderly and chaotic.[73] When Plato constructs a just community in the Republic he does so according to the dictates of reason-a reason which is associated with the need to control and master the world, to dominate natural objects and bend them to human will. The community he creates is both ordered and perfect. Yet the description of the process of degeneration in Book VIII of the Republic makes it clear that even the perfect community has tendencies toward disorder, even after it has been established in the best possible way.

Plato also, Gouldner suggests, views the division of objects into classes as an important aspect of control. As he points out, nomos, moira, and reason are all dividers and allocators. The core assumption is that classification aids control.[74] In this world in which reason is the agent of domination through its role in classification and naming, Plato mistrusts the senses and suggests that they may corrupt reason both in the city and in the individual. This, after all, is one of the points of the massive education of the senses in the Republic where music and exercise are to be used along with other techniques to ensure the rule of reason in the lives of the guardian class.[75]

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[73] The following discussion owes much to Gouldner's discussion.

[74] Gouldner, Enter Plato, pp. 327-329.

Even Plato's conception of reason itself is infected with the essential heirarchical quality of his outlook. Reason, after all, is not simply another human faculty: It is the master of all of them, the only one with a legitimate claim to command. A second feature of Plato's understanding of reason which Gouldner has termed authoritarian is the way Platonic (and later, Aristotelian) reason is interested not only in ordering things but in arranging them in a hierarchical pattern.[76] Reason can be either the master of the passions or appetites or their slave: no other relation is possible. The two are so profoundly alien to each other that LeGuin's statement of the limited possibilities for relations between alien beings could also describe the relation between reason and emotion within the Platonic citizen. Aristotle, too, uses the analogy of the authority of man over slave and the different authority of man over wife to construct the account of the superiority of the soul over the body, and reason over appetite.[77]

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75 Although Plato includes women in his guardian class, they are detached from the world of necessity and nature. They particpate not as females but as inferior and mutilated males. On the issue of reason and domination see Plato, Republic V 439E-441D. The theme of the weakness of males confronted by female forces appears in the Republic as well in the form of Plato's real skepticism about the strength of the soul when confronted by the overpowering demands of the body or the emotions.

76 Gouldner, Enter Plato pp. 334-335.

77 See Aristotle, Politics tr. Ernest Barker (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962)I, 5:1254b 2-9, I, 13: 1260a 4-8; See also Horowitz, "Aristotle and Women," p. 210.

As to the subduing of inner as well as external nature foreshadowed in the Oresteia, both Plato and Aristotle are explicit about the proper ordering of the human soul. Indeed, the only respect Socrates gives what might be termed the irrational side of his own soul occurs in his accounts of his daemon. And Socrates externalizes this aspect of his being by calling it a daemon. He never acknowledges it as a part of himself, and, in part due to this refusal, never accepts the passions and appetites of individuals as creative, energetic, and fundamentally enriching aspects of the human character.[78] In this of course he is part of the tradition which goes back at least as far as Homer's invocation of the madness of até as an explanation of action.

The basic polarity in Plato's view of social thought and action, then, is the opposition of emotional or appetitive to rational behavior. Plato is seeking to assimilate the rational and divine--in part through the role both have in the mastery of nature (both external and internal nature). This serves to heighten the opposition beteeen the rational and the appetitive. The rational faculty arranges things, and by naming, imposes order on the world. The divine then becomes pure mind, and as a result, the excellent citizen is almost disembodied. In contrast to the divine, the natural tendency toward disorder is there in all other

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78 See, for example, the passage in the Republic where he says that the soul not ruled by reason would be unable to act because the passions would oppose it at every turn. (p. 151 of Great Dialogues of Plato (New York: Mentor,1956) See Gouldner, Enter Plato, p. 337. But see especially the role of the daemon in the Apology, Crito, and Phaedo.

things--especially in their bodily or material forms. For Plato, the non-divine is, then, both disorderly and a thing of necessity.[79] The fear that the material can contaminate the divine shows clearly in Plato's refusal to allow the guardian class to have any property other than what is absolutely necessary, and his insistence that they live in common and share possessions. Were they to get land they would become householders and farmers instead of guardians. That is, they would have become contaminated by the realm of necessity.[80] The human population of the disorderly realm of necessity, even in Plato's Republic is disproportionately composed of women and slaves.

Gouldner argues that this view of order versus disorder was due to the impact of the experience of slavery on the Greek mind. I see it, however, as a result of the sexual division between women and men in Greek society. The fact that we are so comfortable with these dualisms simply speaks to the persistence of those same divisions in our own society. But the effects of the dualistic vision seem to be remarkably similar in structuring the understanding of power as the domination of alien, disorderly, and perhaps essentially hostile forces.

The warrior and the guardian class, in contrast to women and slaves, must exercise the cardinal virtues: courage, temperance,

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79 Republic p.348.

80 Republic 415E-420A.

justice, and wisdom.[81] To exercise these virtues, the citizen must be free of the necessity to labor. Thus, Aristotle finds it appropriate to discuss in the Politics the property necessary to support a life of political activity. In this he follows Plato, whose guardian class rules in part through its separation from the demands of necessity. And Plato argues even more clearly than Aristotle, that a city based on necessity alone is a city of pigs.[82] One might suggest that the citizen , in order to exercise the cardinal virtues must be free of the demands of the body in order to allow his soul, or rational part to rule. It is a fascinating commentary on the Greek view of the relative strength of the soul and body that the soul seems to have no chance of ruling if necessary labor intrudes into the citizen's life. The only way to protect the soul of the citizen is to wall it off as much as possible from necessity, and thus from the female.[83]

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81 Plato Republic IV 427E-432D

82 See, for a different view of the significance of the city of pigs imagery, Arlene W. Saxonhouse, "Comedy in Callipolis: Animal Imagery in the Republic" in The American Political Science Review. VXXII,3 (September, 1978), 888-901.

83 Slater cites Erich Neuman, The Great Mother (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963)p. 215 as an example of the powerlessness and fragility of male forces. Perseus is barely able to kill the Medusa with two gods helping, magic implements, a sleeping enemy, and a goddess guiding his hand. This buttressing reflects fo Slater the brittleness of masculine self confidence among the Greeks. (Slater, "The Greek Family...", p. 40.)

The warrior hero and his citizen successor share many important qualities. The integration of the warrior and the citizen for whom competition is a way of life can only occur in a situation where the latter is as free from the practical necessity of labor as the former. Necessary labor is, on the view of these Athenians, opposed to the citizen's need to be free from dependence on others. Yet the polis is not a battlefield. the citizen is continually caught between the freedom of political competition and the necessity of household management; demands of the two worlds conflict, yet entrance to the higher realm requires membership in the lower. It is here that eros can play a role as mediator and reconciler of oppositions. The community of competitors threatens to destroy itself--to degenerate into the war of each against all--unless the competition for dominance is ritualized and regulated. Eros too could take a destructive form, but it can also serve to protect the community.[84] Eros can help to ritualize the competition, and to direct it away from dangerous competitions. The community must incorporate eros, including its explicitly sexual dimensions, to develop ways for the many to become one. It accomplishes this through the eros of male citizens for each other. There is, of course, a contradiction between competition as their way of life on the one hand and the maintenance of the community through their eros for each other on the other, a conflict which is never satisfactorily resolved, and becomes a contributing factor to the fragility of the political community.

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[84] See for example, the first half of Phaedrus.

The community as a whole, the polis , exists for the purpose of, or in Aristotle's terms, has as its end, the arranging of competition among its citizens to show that they are worth loving or (the same thing within the Athenian context) to show that they are worth dominating. That is, the citizen/warrior must show that a victory over him is significant enough to make his vanquisher preeminent among citizens, a victory which will mean the achievement of honor and glory.

The political community, then is an exclusively male community, one in which power and sexuality are intertwined, a commmunity in which the exercise of political power involves rule over equals, over those who are worth loving, over those who might be able to turn the tables. In this community, only through dominating those worth dominating can one achieve glory and honor.

Necessity and Opposition

What emerges from all this is an understanding of the political community which rests on dualism and contradiction, in which the two realms are in opposition and in which the higher world depends on the lower world. Just as in the individual, the higher part should rule the lower part, so too in the community, the best should rule. But in the literal way the Republic takes the analogy of the nature of the individual to the community, the existence of the rulers (soul, reasoning part) depends on the survival of the ruled (or body), and yet can be distorted and corrupted by the demands of the ruled. The contradictory situation emerges in several areas. First, the eros of the citizens which holds the community together is constantly threatened by their competition with each other. Their efforts to

distinguish themselves at someone else's expense create a situation in which the existence of the community is constantly threatened. The polis might disintegrate into a battlefield. Even the eros of citizens is invaded by this competition: there it takes the form of wishing to distinguish oneself in the eyes of the beloved, wishing to dominate others for the sake of the beloved, and thereby show oneself capable of taking only the most worthy as lover.

Second, the realm of politics, the public realm, both depends on and exists only in opposition to the private realm, that is, the household. One can only be a citizen by being the head of a household. Third, the realm of freedom and leisure inhabited by citizens depends on the existence of a realm of necessity populated by women, slaves, and laborers--but defined in essence by its female nature. Fourth, there is an opposition beteen a realm in which political rule is possible--rule over equals which involves the constant possibility of changing from ruler to ruled, and a realm defined by the rule of master over servants--a rule over unequals where the ruled can never become rulers. The citizen must be involved in this realm of unequals to qualify to enter the public realm. The polis, Aristotle argued, must be understood as an association of households. He lays out in systematic form the ways oikos and polis are interdependent ,but in tension with each other.[85]

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[85] Aristotle, Politics Book I, tr. Ernst Barker.

The comedies of Aristophanes further demonstrate this tension between the oikos and polis, a tension with its roots in the situation of the Homeric hero in battle. The fact that it remained a fundamental problem is highlighted by their reliance on this tension as a major source for humor. The comic situation in both the Lysistrata and the Congresswomen rely on the breakdown of the disjunction between the polis and oikos, and most especially on women's breaking away from their traditional roles-- with catastrophic results for the political community. In the Lysistrata, it is the eros of the household--common or physically inspired love--which takes over the public space. The Congresswomen uses a similar comic strategy, where it is the organization of the household which takes over the polis. For Aristophanes, to put women in charge of the city is to transform it. The plays make it clear that a public role for women would inevitably involve the destruction of the polis itself.

Power on this model is domination in a triple sense. First, it is domination of those outside the community. It requires an attempt to dominate material nature, women, slaves, and barbarians. Second, within the community, each citizen strives for mastery, for pre-eminence within the community. And third, it requires the attempt to dominate the appetitive and irrational part of the self. Eros and explicit hierarchy are simply two means for accomplishing the same thing. The fear of and contempt for the bodily, the irrational, the appetitive, and ultimately, the female are all part of the same vision.[86]

To change the world view within which eros and domination are aspects of each other would require a different understanding of sexuality and power, and in consequence, of politics. And, given what we have seen from a reading of the Greek sources, a change in our understanding of politics and power would require a change in our understanding of both the human relation to nature, and the human relation to the body. It would most importantly require a change in the social relations which are the source for this world view.

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86 There are a number of fascinating parallels one could spin off from this observation. For example, Diana Russell in "On Pornography," in Chrysalis 4,1977,p. 12, noted that pornography was a "celebration of male power over women." But on the basis of these ancient sources, pornography might be more accurately described as a documentation of the male fear of and contempt for the female, the bodily, and the enslaved. There is some evidence that these fears are more closely associated with male sexuality than female. Slater (The Glory of Hera), Nancy Chodorow("Family Structure and Femnine Personality" in Woman, Culture, and Society) Adrienne Rich (Of Woman Born) Dorothy Dinnerstein, (The Mermaid and the Minotaur) and Sigmund Freud (Civilization and its Discontents) all present psychological reasons for the sense that men generally have of the internal and external, and also for the sense that women do not make such clear distinctions and have more diffuse ego boundaries. I find these arguments interesting and persuasive.